

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 08696 251435Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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AMCONSUL LAHORE
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CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PK
SUBJECT: POLITICAL SITUATION IN PAKISTAN

1. THE ELECTION COMMISSION, MEETING IN ISLAMABAD AUGUST 24, ALLOCATED ELECTION SYMBOLS FOR THE OCTOBER 18 POLLS. BOTH PARTIES RETAINED THEIR MARCH ELECTION SYMBOLS: THE SWORD FOR THE PPP AND THE PLOUGH FOR THE PAKISTAN NATIONAL ALLIANCE (PNA). ALTHOUGH THERE WAS NO MENTION IN OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASES OF ANY OBJECTION RAISED BY THE PPP TO THE ALLOCATION OF A SINGLE SYMBOL TO THE NINE PARTY ALLIANCE, IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE PPP DID OBJECT
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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 08696 251435Z

AND WAS OVERRULED BY THE ELECTION COMMISSION. OBSERVERS SEE THE ALLOCATION OF A SINGLE SYMBOL FOR THE PNA AS A SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARD A SUCCESSFUL SHOWING IN OCTOBER. THE COMMISSION ALSO ALLOCATED SEVENTEEN OTHER SYMBOLS TO LESSER PARTIES AND GAVE INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES THEIR CHOICE OF THE 33 REMAINING SYMBOLS.

2. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE BBC AUGUST 23, CHIEF MARTIAL LAW

ADMINISTRATOR (CMLA) GENERAL ZIA REITERATED HIS DETERMINATION TO HOLD ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER "AT ANY COST," AND SAID THAT HE WOULD HAND OVER POWER TO WHICHEVER PARTY WON THE ELECTION. ZIA ALSO NOTED THAT THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT POSSESSED INFORMATION CONCERNING "GROSS IRREGULARITIES COMMITTED BY THE FORMER GOVERNMENT," BUT SAID THE FINDINGS OF THE VARIOUS INVESTIGATIONS WOULD BE MADE PUBLIC ONLY AFTER THE OCTOBER POLLS. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE RE-PROCESSING PLANT, THE CMLA SAID "THERE WAS NO PRESSURE FROM THE UNITED STATES." HE SAW NO REASON WHY THE U.S. SHOULD OBJECT TO PAKISTAN'S ACQUIRING THIS PLANT, AS "INDIA HAD THREE NUCLEAR REACTORS WHILE PAKISTAN HAD ONLY ONE." EFFORTS TO BLOCK THE SALE OF THE NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANT TO PAKISTAN, ZIA CONTENDED, WERE AIMED AT PREVENTING THE COUNTRY FROM ACQUIRING NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY.

3. PNA SECRETARY-GENERAL PROFESSOR GHAFUOR AHMED, IN AN INTERVIEW WHICH SOUNDED LIKE A TRIAL BALLOON FOR THE FORTHCOMING PNA MANIFESTO, PUBLICIZED PNA VIEWS ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE SAID THAT THE PNA ATTACHES "HIGHEST PRIORITY" TO ACQUIRING THE NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANT AND "UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD IT ABANDON THIS PROJECT." GHAFUOR SAID THAT THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT HAD DIFFICULTY ACQUIRING THE PLANT BECAUSE OF FORMER PM BHUTTO'S "CREDIBILITY GAP." HE SAID THAT THE PNA WOULD GIVE ASSURANCES THAT THE PLANT WOULD BE USED FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES. GHAFUOR ALSO NOTED THAT AFTER THE PNA WAS VOTED INTO POWER THEY WOULD SAY "GOODBYE" TO CENTO, PROMOTE "CORRECT" RELATIONS WITH THEIR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 08696 251435Z

NEIGHBORS -- IRAN, AFGHANISTAN, AND INDIA -- AND WOULD SEEK A "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH BANGLADESH BASED UPON "CLOSER ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND PROVIDING PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT IN THE FIELD OF TRADE AND COMMERCE." GHAFUOR ALSO SAID THAT A PNA GOVERNMENT WOULD MAKE A "CONCERTED EFFORT" TO RESOLVE THE KASHMIR ISSUE. THE PNA, HE SAID, WOULD ATTACH "TOP-MOST PRIORITY" TO THE RESOLUTION OF THE KASHMIR DISPUTE WHICH, HE COMMENTED, HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN PROPER ATTENTION BY THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS AND HAD, IN FACT, BEEN "USED AS A STUNT."

4. COMMENT: AS A RESULT OF MLA REGULATIONS AND THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMAZAN, POLITICS IN PAKISTAN HAVE SETTLED INTO A ROUTINE OF MORNING PRESS REPORTS OF POLITICAL STATEMENTS MADE AT THE PREVIOUS EVENING'S IFTAR PARTIES -- THOSE PLEASANT GATHERINGS WHERE SOCIABLE POLITICOS BREAK THE FAST AND HOME THEIR ORATORICAL TALENTS IN PREPARATION FOR THE POST-RAMAZAN ACTIVE CAMPAIGNING. BOTH SIDES USE THE GATHERINGS TO MAKE THE APPROPRIATE AND EXPECTED COMMENTS, THE PNA ABOUT THE ISLAMIC PANACEA, AND THE PPP ABOUT THEIR UNBREAKABLE TIES WITH THE TOILING MASSES. THE ELECTION COMMISSION'S DECISION ON SYMBOLS IS SIGNIFICANT. THE PNA WOULD HAVE HAD A DIFFICULT HURDLE TO OVERCOME IN OCTOBER IF IT HAD BEEN SADDLED WITH NINE DIFFERENT SYMBOLS. WE ALSO FIND PROFESSOR

GHAFOOR'S STATEMENTS INTERESTING, AS THEY ARE THE FIRST DETAILED
PNA FOREIGN POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS IN SOME TIME. WE WILL ANALYZE
BOTH THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE PNA AND PPP
MANIFESTOS, IN RELATION TO US INTERESTS, WHEN THEY ARE
ANNOUNCED PROBABLY SOON AFTER RAMAZAN.
HUMMEL

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